



Wyoming Department of Agriculture

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May 24, 2005

Bridger-Teton National Forest
Greys River Ranger District
Charlene Bucha Gentry, District Ranger
P.O. Box 339
Afton, WY 83110

RE: Weiner Creek Aspen Treatment 2005

To Ms. Gentry,

Following are the comments from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) on the scoping document to perform aspen treatment on the Greys River Ranger District of the Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF).

Our comments are specific to our mission within state government which is to be dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this ongoing project will have major impacts upon our agriculture industry, our natural resources, and the welfare of our citizens, we believe it's important that we be kept informed of all actions and decisions and we continue to be provided the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

We support the partnership efforts of the BTNF, to recognize the knowledge gained by including agencies and organizations, like the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) and the State of Wyoming, within the project details.

Continued decline in the condition and acreage of aspen stands and the degraded condition of sagebrush communities will increasingly have adverse effects on livestock grazing. We support efforts to restore the vegetative and age-class diversity of a fire-adapted ecosystem to aspen and sagebrush stands in Wyoming. We are pleased to see forest and range health being considered at a watershed level, versus at a much smaller and individual project scale.

We ask that the BTNF continue to work with all livestock grazing permittees who may potentially be adversely affected by this project. We ask that conversations and inclusion

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in the project remain forefront to ensure the recovery of the treatment area, while not negatively impacting the economic viability of the grazing permittee. We request the duration of time needed after prescribed burning be evaluated on a case by case basis in cooperation with the grazing permittees, rather than adhering to a predetermined nationwide policy.

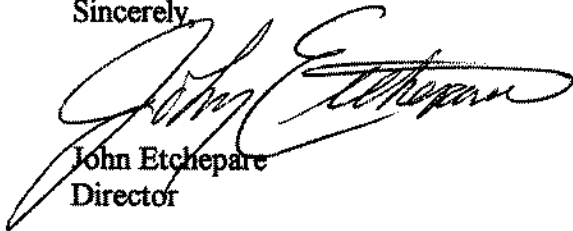
Please continue to include the WDA as an interested party in this analysis. All future information should be sent to:

Wyoming Department of Agriculture
Natural Resource Section
2219 Carey Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82002

wdapolicy@state.wy.us

We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



John Etchepare
Director

JE/mh

Cc: Governor's Planning Office
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation